



DIVIDEND POND TRAILS AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL DISTRICT,
OUR HIDDEN GEM
ROCKY HILL, CONNECTICUT

Located along the beautiful Connecticut River, Rocky Hill is a thriving community with a rich heritage dating back to being independently incorporated in 1843. We strive to preserve our small town charm, while encouraging new development. We are committed to fiscal accountability, responsive government and the highest level of service to the community. The Town's leaders, in partnership with our schools, public library and other municipal departments make Rocky Hill a great place to live, work and visit.

Rocky Hill is located just south of its capital, Hartford. According to HomeSnacks, Rocky Hill has been named the top ninth (9th) place to live in Connecticut because of our population of approximately 19,900 people, low unemployment rate of 5.1%, superb education system, short commute time to and from the capital city, central location between the two major cities of Boston, Massachusetts and New York, New York, low crime rate, and classification in the lowest 75th percentile for the cost of living.

There are nine (9) parks within the Town which foster opportunities for families, children of all ages, adults and seniors allowing time for creating memories, sharing precious time and educating themselves on the history of their hometown. The Parks and Recreation Department hosts hundreds of programs year round, many of which are held at our parks. It is the mission of the Rocky Hill Parks and Recreation Department to provide comprehensive recreational and park programs to all ages at a reasonable cost to improve the quality of life for the residents of Rocky Hill. The goals of the Department are to improve health benefits, enhance self-esteem, reduce



stress, and provide life skills for all Rocky Hill residents. The programs are intended to promote family unity, reduce crime, strengthen neighborhood involvement, and provide safe, developed parks where these programs can take place and where residents can renew their spirits in natural settings.

This three (3) year project, completed in October 2015, has added short and long term value to the community while bringing out the uniqueness of the park, all with an effective and innovative way of financing the project.



The restoration of Dividend Park, now known as Dividend Pond Trails and Archaeological District has brought life back to the disheveled sixty-eight (68) acres of land. Three (3) miles of trails have been outlined and a map created for all of



those who wish to meander through history and the outdoors discovering ponds, a three tiered waterfall, and the natural beauty of life on earth.

Trash, brush, and debris were removed in order to prepare the land to become a park. A set of stairs and a bridge were constructed from wood and

stone along with the installation of new gates, a new kiosk detailing the trails, maps, and history, benches were placed throughout, and improvements to the dam were made to enhance the functioning and safety of the park.



HISTORY UNVEILS ITSELF

Dividend Park served as Rocky Hill's first industrial park from 1667 when it was granted to Reverend Gershom Bulkeley until the early 1900s. The park served as a water-powered industrial complex where mills grinded grain and sawed trees into lumber. The factories produced shears, chisels, hoes, toys, chandeliers, and horseshoes among other useful items. In 1975, the Town of Rocky Hill took ownership of the dam and the surrounding two hundred and thirty-five (235) acres as a part of a referendum that transferred the land from the Bigelow-Sanford Company to the Town. Sixty-eight (68) acres eventually became Dividend Pond Trails and Archaeological District and the remaining acres became Rocky Hill's current Industrial Park.



ONE OF A KIND

In 2002, the Office of Connecticut Archaeology conducted a dig in Dividend Park. The dig was completed by a Rocky Hill resident, a Connecticut State Archeologist, and the friends at the Office of State Archaeology. In 2004, the land was designated as a state archaeological preserve and was placed on the State Historic Register after years of research and review. Some features such as stairs and columns from an old manufacturing plant from 1884 and stalwarts of a mill that was built in 1680 have been preserved to enhance the rich antiquity of the grounds.



Ten water-powered archaeological sites are now featured along the trails which empowers the history behind the land. These sites were cleaned, ridden of graffiti, preserved, and featured along the trails and land. The ten archaeological sites are also now defined

with a small podium at each site which outlines why the site is important and what it was used for.

NOT JUST A PARK – VALUE TO COMMUNITY

This parcel of land was not cared for since the factories had shut down and were destroyed in the 19th century. The Town wanted to sell the sixty-eight (68) acres of land to make it part of the Town’s Industrial Park. Rocky Hill residents rallied together in support of the land and its preservation as open land. When the attempt to sell the land went to vote, residents overwhelmingly passed the Town Referendum, which set aside these sixty-eight (68) acres of land as open space in perpetuity.



To date, at least five (5) Eagle Scout projects have been completed at Dividend Pond Trails and Archaeological District to improve the lands. Projects included: cleaning and clearing trails; installing No Littering signs; constructing and installing a bridge; tree identification; and the planting of new shrubs.

Dividend Pond Trails and Archaeological District participates in Connecticut Trails Weekend. Trails Weekend is an event sponsored by the Connecticut Forest and Parks Association where parks around the state celebrate National Trails Day. People from all over



come to our park to join in the hike through our trails and admire our natural and historic landmarks. Not only are our residents of all ages enjoying Dividend Pond Trails and Archaeological District, but people migrate from other towns and cities to discover the ancient artifacts of the grounds.

The short-term value of this massive project is clear – boy scouts, volunteers, and residents have the satisfaction of volunteering their time and effort to make the park beautiful as it once was in a different light. Archaeologists discovered the special marks of the land. The trees and plant life now have room to breathe, grow, and flourish in the open space.



The future and long-term value of this project depends on us. Knowing this land will remain an archaeological district forever, people are asked not to touch the exposed artifacts and enjoy the beauty. ATVs are prohibited and violators are fined \$500 per State regulations. The Town of Rocky Hill's Parks and Recreation Areas Ordinance has been updated to include fines for the act of paintballing and for the restriction of certain activities which may affect the land. The State government has been actively involved in the preservation of Dividend Pond Trails and supports the

Archaeological District. With the help of residents, volunteers, and state and local governments, we can maintain the health of the plant life, continue to preserve artifacts and the natural resources of the land, and live healthier lives by walking and hiking. The Girl Scouts have added an exciting and innovative activity to Dividend Pond Trails and Archaeological District, which is geocaching. For years to come, the Girl Scouts and visitors of this park will continue to learn about the people who have lived before them and what treasures were hidden and left to be found again in the future.

AFFORDABILITY

As you're reading this you're probably asking yourself, "How much money has this cost?" Well, we had to get creative. Three (3) self-less people volunteered more than a total of ten thousand (10,000) hours to complete the project.

These volunteers worked with our State Representative to secure a grant in the amount of \$81,500. This grant was used for all of the park improvements and the Parks and Recreation Department in addition to the volunteers worked together to upgrade Divided Pond Trails. The late Amateur Archaeologist June Cooke also volunteered



and spent countless hours conducting intensive research and the famous dig in Dividend Park.

All of the volunteers, Boy Scouts, now proud Eagle Scouts, Girl Scouts, and many others collaborated and created the documents which you can find published today along with all of the hard work which was spent at the park. The endless dedication to Dividend Pond Trails and Archaeological District has been shown and the Town of Rocky Hill and the Rocky Hill residents extends much gratitude and appreciation.

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